

# Medical Practice Questions

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EDITOR'S NOTE: From time to time medical practice questions of general interest are referred to the Scientific Board by the Peer Review Commission of the California Medical Association. Each is sent to members of the appropriate Scientific Advisory Panel.\* Their responses are collated, reviewed and then submitted to the Peer Review Commission as the Scientific Board's opinion on the scientific and practice aspects of the question. The Commission adds suggestions to assist peer review units and authorizes publication.

These opinions and positions are informational only and are not intended to be used as instructions, directives or policy statements. The appropriateness of care in individual cases should not be determined by these answers, but should be reviewed by local peer review committees.

Questions and reprint requests may be submitted to the Medical Practice Questions Committee, Peer Review Commission, California Medical Association, 731 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94103.

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## Treatment for Thinning Hair in Women

### QUESTION:

*Are injections of systemic steroids and Antuitrin S® (chorionic gonadotropin) accepted medical practice in the treatment of thinning hair in 25- to 35-year-old women? (Asked by San Diego Foundation for Medical Care)*

### OPINION:

In the opinion of the Advisory Panels on Dermatology and Internal Medicine, use of Antuitrin S® (chorionic gonadotropin) is not accepted medical practice for the treatment of thinning hair in young women. Low doses of corticosteroids (oral, topical and intralesional administration were mentioned) are sometimes used in the management of patients with alopecia areata. Opinion is divided as to the effectiveness of this course, but there is no preferred treatment for the condition.

## Thermograms for Vascular Disease

### QUESTION:

*Are thermograms considered accepted medical practice for the diagnosis of vascular disease, or are they experimental? (Asked by the Medical Care Foundation of Sacramento)*

### OPINION:

In the opinion of the Advisory Panels on General Surgery, Radiology and Internal Medicine, opinion

is divided as to whether thermograms are accepted or experimental in the diagnosis and evaluation of vascular disease.

Many respondents agreed that thermograms may occasionally provide information which is useful in a specific case, but more accepted methods of obtaining the same information would make their routine use seem inadvisable.

Occasions for thermograms might include pre-operative or postoperative evaluation in cases of patients in whom sympathectomy or arterial reconstruction is done, or to establish a diagnosis of Raynaud's disease.

## Vabra® Aspirator

### QUESTION:

*(1) Is use of the Vabra® Aspirator (vacuum curette aspirator) to perform a diagnostic dilatation and curettage (D & C) in the office without anesthesia considered accepted medical practice? (2) Is this technique safe and capable of producing results which correlate well with those obtained via the conventional approach? (Asked by Blue Shield of California)*

### OPINION:

In the opinion of the Advisory Panels on Obstetrics and Gynecology, and General and Family Practice, use of a vacuum curette aspirator, such as the Vabra® Aspirator, is an accepted safe medical practice.

However, curettage with this device is useful only as a screening procedure comparable to endometrial biopsy—not as a substitute for a dilation and curettage.

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\*The Scientific Board of the California Medical Association has a Scientific Advisory Panel for each of 23 recognized specialties of medical practice. Each Advisory Panel includes representation from the appropriate department of each of the eight medical schools in California, representatives of specialty societies in the field and representatives from the Specialty Sections of the Association. The Advisory Panels are thus broadly and authoritatively based in both academia and practice.